



# HOW GSF ACTs

**The Global Survivors Fund's Approach to  
Interim Reparative Measures Projects**



**GLOBAL  
SURVIVORS FUND**

A GLOBAL FUND FOR SURVIVORS OF  
CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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# Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and the Right to Reparation

The harm caused to victims of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is immense and complex, and responding to it requires immediate care and support. Such harm involves not only physical and psychological trauma, but also stigmatisation from family and communities and an array of consequential socio-economic struggles.

Survivors of CRSV have a right to reparation under various national and international legal frameworks including human rights, humanitarian and criminal law. The responsibility for fulfilling such right lies both with perpetrators and with States.

Far too often, however, the right to reparation remains unfulfilled as neither perpetrators nor States are held accountable, and both fail to assume their responsibilities in providing reparation to survivors.

What this means is that survivors who have experienced the atrocity of CRSV are left without the necessary means to heal or rebuild their lives. Without them, the harms caused are compounded as the aftermath of CRSV affects all areas of life.

The Global Survivors Fund (“GSF”) was created in response to this reality and aims to enhance access to reparation for CRSV survivors across the globe.

## Introduction to IRM Projects

GSF works within three key pillars: Act, Advocate and Guide. Through the Act pillar, survivors are provided with interim reparative measures (“IRM”) through the implementation of IRM projects, which are built to:

- Involve survivors in the project design at every phase, through a process of co-creation;
- Ensure a transformative and sustainable impact on their lives;
- Foster collaboration between key stakeholders to take on the wider task of developing comprehensive reparation programmes to meet the needs of all survivors;
- Demonstrate that providing survivor-centred reparations is urgent, possible, and effective.

GSF’s IRM projects are limited in size and duration and are intended to spur further action by the State and other duty bearers going forward.

## TERMINOLOGY

In working towards and advocating for effective reparation, the words we use are important. With that in mind, it is important to highlight the differences between the following key terms:

### **Reparations**

The measures that survivors are entitled to from the State or other duty bearers in reparation of harms suffered due to CRSV. Such measures have been defined by international standards, and may include measures of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition. Reparations can be individual or collective in nature and should serve to remedy the harm caused. They may be awarded either by judicial bodies or through domestic administrative mechanisms or programmes established by the State.

### **Interim Reparative Measures (IRM)**

Measures provided to survivors by non-duty bearers such as non-governmental and civil society organisations to support their process of healing and rebuilding, in circumstances where States or other duty-bearers have yet to comply with their obligation to provide reparations. IRM are premised on the urgent need for reparatory measures. They are inspired by administrative reparation programmes, but receiving such measures does not substitute the obligations that States or other responsible parties have to provide comprehensive reparations. IRM are developed with the active participation of survivors through a process of co-creation, which carries reparative value in itself.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Each of GSF's projects is guided by three core principles: survivor-centredness and co-creation, contextualisation and multi-stakeholder participation.

### **Survivor-centredness and Co-creation**

Survivors are not only best placed, but are also entitled to determine their reparatory needs, and are therefore at the centre of each IRM project. Both the project Steering Committee and project team include survivors, and survivors as a whole participate in all phases of the project, truly co-creating each and every stage of the process.

### **Contextualisation**

Every context where CRSV takes place is different and what is relevant in one context may not be in another. Acknowledging this requires that all contextual specificities be taken into account when developing and implementing each individual IRM Project.

Applying this principle demands a deep understanding of each context, which can only be achieved with the guidance and active participation of survivors, national and local civil society actors and organisations, and experts with knowledge of the context.

## Multi-stakeholder Participation

Comprehensive reparations for all CRSV survivors can only be achieved with the involvement of many different parties. IRM projects seek to foster such involvement by structurally encouraging collaboration among multiple different actors including survivors and civil society organisations, but also government bodies, international organisations and individual experts, who work together towards this objective.

In every IRM project, a Steering Committee composed of representatives from such diverse stakeholders, when accepted by survivors, is set up to oversee the project, and to provide strategic and technical guidance to the project team.

This approach aims to encourage a better appropriation by relevant stakeholders and further scaling up of reparations efforts.

## GSF'S Project Methodology

GSF projects are carried out following a semi-flexible methodology, the core of which is set out below. This approach has been developed on the basis of experience acquired in IRM projects delivered to date. In line with all three principles explained above, partner organisations and projects teams are asked to adapt and tailor this core methodology to ensure it is in line with how they operate, but more importantly, to permit the project to be truly co-created with survivors in each context.

### PREPARATORY PHASE

When starting an IRM project, GSF first selects the project country using a set of selection criteria, including a recommendation from GSF's [Global Reparation Study](#). Then, guided by the principles of multistakeholder participation and contextualisation, GSF identifies potential national or local organisations with whom to partner for the project development and implementation. Partners are then selected following a comprehensive due diligence process to verify their expertise and ensure their ability to deliver for survivors.

### PROJECT LOCATION MAIN SELECTION CRITERIA

- Recommendation of the **GSF Global Reparation Study**
- Settings where sexual violence has been used in a **widespread/ systematic manner**
- **Unmet reparation needs** of survivors/ victims of conflict-related sexual violence
- Availability of a **coalition of multiple stakeholders** including civil society partners
- Presence of or potential for a **national survivor network**
- **Urgency & opportunity**
- **Complementarity** with other initiatives
- **Geographic** diversity
- GSF will prioritise programs that benefit **survivors who are currently alive**

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Once the project partner(s) has/ve been selected, they receive training, and are then required to develop and propose a project implementation plan, in line with the GSF project methodology.

This plan is developed based on information gathered through a mix of desk-based research and focus group discussions with survivors. The survivors participating in discussions at this stage of the process are survivors who the project partners are already in contact or working with.

Exploratory missions can be conducted in the selected country to meet community leaders, local authorities, focal points and organisations working with survivors in all potential project locations. Such missions are carried out to better understand the situation of survivors, estimate the number of survivors in each location and inform the final selection of project location(s).

### CONTENT OF AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Specific project location(s)
- Main project phases
- Proposed Steering Committee and project team composition
- Survivor identification process proposal
- IRM type and implementation process proposal
- Project budget
- Where relevant a plan for supplementary advocacy and government technical assistance activities
- Exit strategy proposal

## CREATING THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

### Project team

Once the project's proposed implementation plan has been agreed and the partnership formalised, the team can be built. Usually, a project team includes a project coordinator, and a core team as identified in the implementation plan, with different team members intervening at different phases of the project. Every project team includes psychosocial assistants, who usually live within the community and act as individual case managers for survivors. Wherever possible, project staff is recruited among survivors.

### Steering committee

Every project will have a Steering Committee composed of at least a third of survivors along with experts including at least one member with expertise in psychology, and representatives of non-governmental organisation(s), including the partner organisation(s). Representatives of the State and international organisations may also be included in the Steering Committee. All members of the Committee must be agreed to by the survivors consulted in the preparatory phases of the project.

Both the project team and Steering Committee members are given theoretical and practical training, and receive tools in different key areas including GSF's key principles and IRM project methodology. Other areas of training include GSF's code of conduct, best practices for project development and implementation, the right to reparation and the concept of IRM, data protection, project management, safeguarding, and financial reporting.

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Once a full team is in place, the project implementation phase begins, again guided by principles of survivor participation and co-creation.

### **Sensitisation missions**

Engagement with survivors and communities in selected project locations is then undertaken to both gain a better understanding of local contexts and begin the process of building trust so that survivors feel comfortable coming forward. This is achieved through sensitisation missions to project locations during which discussions and sensitisation activities are carried out with survivors and key community figures to raise awareness within the community about the project and its methodology and objectives, to engage with survivors, communities, civil society and other key stakeholders and to begin identifying survivors who may qualify for participation.

### **Survivor identification**

The first step in the process of identifying the survivors who will be included in the project is to work with survivors to review the process proposed in the project implementation plan. This is done by engaging in discussions in selected project locations as well as with the Steering Committee, creating the space for survivors to provide their input and to further define or adapt the process accordingly.

Some of the matters to be addressed at this point include:

- The ways of ensuring that no further harm is caused to survivors, that the identification process holds a reparative value, that the survivors who participate in the project are not stigmatised and are well protected against reprisals or family pressure when they receive financial IRM;
- Defining the scope of survivor participation, considering for example what approach to take in respect of male survivors, survivors living abroad, deceased survivors or children born of rape or who witnessed rape;
- Ways of reaching survivors and creating the trust needed for them to come forward;
- Defining the standard of proof and documentation required for the identification of survivors;
- Determining the duration for which the survivor identification process will be kept open.

Following this preparatory phase, the formal identification process can begin, during which individual interviews are conducted with potential participants and documentation is gathered.

Such interviews focus on the impact of CRSV, and it is made clear to survivors that they are under no obligation to (re)tell their stories should they not wish to do so. Many survivors have explained that, often for the first time, they have felt in a safe environment, and have chosen to share their stories, speaking out about what happened to them.

Identification interviews can be difficult for survivors as they speak about their experiences, and so psychological support is made available both during and after the interview.

On the basis of the information gathered, the Steering Committee verifies that survivors meet the criteria to participate in the project, doing so on a no-names basis. In cases where there is any doubt, the Steering Committee can request that a second interview be carried out with the survivor.

## **IRM identification**

Once the survivor identification process is completed, the project can move to the phase of co-creating both individual IRM packages and collective IRM with the identified survivors.

The proposal put forward regarding possible IRM in the project implementation plan developed during the preparatory phase will serve as a starting point for this stage of the process. The team and survivors will focus on creating IRM packages that are contextually relevant and meet the needs of each survivor.

The type of IRM included in any package will differ depending on needs and contexts, but individual IRM may include measures such as medical and psychological rehabilitation, financial compensation plans, education and vocational training support, finance management training support, support for housing and legal and administrative support.

Collective IRM are developed with survivors and, where relevant, also with their communities. Example of such measures include the creation of a survivors' community centre, a survivors' hearing, a collective memory project, or a commemoration event, among others.

The co-creation process for the IRM packages is carried out through both individual discussions with each survivor and collective work sessions.

Creating IRM packages also involves defining the process through which such measures will be put in place to ensure sustainable impact. This includes for example the best way of making financial payments, the number of instalments and the timeframe within which such payments could be made. It could also include providing financial management training to ensure a sustainable use of the compensation received or vocational training to support survivors launching a new income-generating activity, identifying the additional legal and administrative support survivors may require or setting up collective savings mechanisms for survivors to pool their resources.

Survivors, the Steering Committee and project team also consider the risks associated with receiving IRM throughout the project. This could include for example family or community pressure, or misappropriation of funds. Identifying these risks allows survivors to decide on any further actions needed to maximise the transformative impact of the IRM, which could include community sensitisation activities, family mediation, positive masculinity trainings, or other actions identified as needed by survivors.

## **IRM Implementation**

Once each survivor's individual IRM package has been finalised and validated by the Steering Committee, again on a no-names basis, the project team moves on to their implementation, usually starting with the individual measures before implementing the collective ones.

During this phase each survivor is assigned a psychosocial assistant/case manager who will be responsible for providing individual support to the survivor, allowing the team to ensure that the measures are implemented correctly, that the survivor is supported, and that issues and challenges are identified and dealt with promptly, all to ensure a truly transformative result for each individual survivor.

## **ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS OF GSF PROJECTS**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Stringent monitoring and evaluation processes are incorporated into all IRM projects to ensure that they are delivering a transformative and sustainable impact in the lives of survivors. This is done through a combination of reporting at every phase and an extensive impact evaluation process in which survivors play a central role.

### **Evaluating the impact of IRM in survivors' lives**

GSF has partnered with an external research institute, the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement, to develop a framework for evaluating the impact of IRM on survivors' lives in each project. Through a mixed methods approach involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, and including a participatory process using a combination of photo-taking and concept mapping workshops, survivors are empowered to define the criteria against which the project should be evaluated. This approach is geared to ensuring that evaluation results are meaningful for survivors and that the evaluation process creates a further opportunity for exchange and discussion for survivors about their experiences of CRSV and their journey of rebuilding.

### **Advocacy**

IRM projects cannot deliver comprehensive reparative measures for all survivors in any country of intervention. In addition to responding to the immediate needs of as many survivors as possible, they are intended to trigger action by the State, not least by demonstrating that it is possible and affordable to set up a State-led reparation programme. To that end, IRM projects also include a strong advocacy component wherever possible, supporting survivors to advocate for their right to comprehensive and meaningful reparation for the harms caused by CRSV.

## **Knowledge creation and technical assistance**

Drawing on lessons learned during each project, GSF is building a wide knowledge base on how to establish a survivor-centred reparation programme, from which GSF can then draw when advising States. Key information and analysis coming out of GSF's Global Reparations Study further contributes to this knowledge base.

## **Protecting the right to privacy**

Throughout each IRM project, the project team handles personal and, at times, highly sensitive information about survivors. Such information falling into the wrong hands could have a catastrophic impact on survivors in terms of personal safety, exposure to stigma and discrimination or impact on mental or physical health. With that in mind, stringent data protection measures are applied throughout the duration of IRM projects to ensure that such information remains confidential and is only kept for as long as it is strictly necessary.

## **PROJECT END**

The end of an IRM project will not happen immediately once the last IRM has been implemented. A transitional period is provided for to ensure that the necessary support and monitoring remains available to allow all survivors to benefit fully from the IRM received.

GSF and its partners are also acutely conscious that the end of the project does not mark the end of the process of healing and recovery for the survivors participating in the project, while still waiting for the perpetrators or the State to provide them with comprehensive reparations. There will actually be many more survivors within the country who have yet to receive any form of reparative measure, having not participated in the project. With that in mind, an exit strategy is included as part of the project plan to ensure that survivors in the project can be referred to other institutions where necessary, and that further advocacy and, where applicable, technical assistance work is carried out towards ensuring that all survivors receive reparations.

Both during and at the end of each IRM project, debriefing sessions are also organised with the project teams. Feedback from these sessions is used to ensure that GSF's project methodology continues to develop, integrating all lessons learnt, so that it can deliver maximal benefit.

# Taking the GSF Methodology Forward

GSF's IRM project methodology has been developed by its team of experts and is based on extensive knowledge of CRSV and reparations. The approach was fine-tuned following its deployment in pilot projects as part of GSF's initial activities, with a view to ensuring a comprehensive process of co-creation, designing, and implementing Interim Reparative Measures that place survivors at the centre and seek to meet their urgent needs.

The methodology will guide GSF's approach to IRM projects going forward and is also intended as a tool available to other actors working in the field of reparations. The unique approach embedded in the GSF methodology also contributes to the expertise at the core of the technical assistance which GSF provides to Governments who have started to or are eager to embark upon the creation of a national reparations programme which include survivors of CRSV.



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